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Cover

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

SEMI-CENTENNIAL

CÉLEBRATION

OF THE

Congregational Church,

AT

NORTH GREENWICH, CONN.,

DECEMBER 25th, 1877.

Port Chester, N. Y.:

JOURNAL POWER PRESS PRINT.

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INTRODUCTORY.

SOME time in the summer of 1876, a former pastor of this Church, Rev. WM. P. ALCOTT, suggested in a letter to the present pastor that its Semi-Centennial ought to be celebrated. The suggestion was brought to the attention of the Church, and heartily accepted. In due time a large committee was appointed to make suitable arrangements for the occasion.

When the day arrived, the weather was most propitious; it seemed more like one of the brightest and most beautiful of October days than like an ordinary Christmas-day. Large numbers of people came from far and near to enjoy the occasion, until the church was filled to its utmost seating capacity. They found it tastefully decorated with evergreens and flowers.

The proceedings commenced at half-past ten o'clock A. M.

At the close of the morning exercises, all present were cordially invited to partake of a most bountiful collation, which the good ladies had provided in the Academy. There appeared to be a general willingness to accept this invitation, so much so that for more than two hours the feasting continued. This gave abundant opportunity for that social enjoyment and intercourse which was a happy feature of the occasion.

About half-past two o'clock P. M., the large congregation again assembled in the church, and the exercises of the afternoon brought to a happy termination a most pleasant and successful Celebration.

Order of Proceedings.

MORNING EXERCISES.

- 1.—PRAYER OF INVOCATION.....BY THE PASTOR.
- 2.—ANTHEM: "This is my Rest forever".....BY THE CHOIR.
- 3.—READING PSALM XC., AND PRAYER.....REV. A. UNDERWOOD.
- 4.—HYMN: "How Pleased and Blessed was I".....BY THE CHOIR.
- 5.—HISTORICAL SKETCHDEACON SILAS H. MEAD.
- 6.—SERMONBY THE PASTOR.
- 7.—HYMN: "I love Thy Kingdom, Lord".....BY THE CHOIR.
- 8.—SALUTATION OF THE MOTHER CHURCHREV. C. R. TREAT.
- 9.—HYMN: "Blest be the tie that Binds".....BY THE CHOIR.
- 10.—BENEDICTIONREV. PETER B. HEROY.

AFTERNOON EXERCISES.

- 1.—HYMN: "All hail the power of Jesus' name".....BY THE CHOIR.
- 2.—PRAYER.....REV. PETER B. HEROY.
- 3.—SKETCH OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.....BY THE SUPERINTENDENT.
- 4.—SINGING: "The Sunday-school War Cry"BY THE CHOIR.
- 5.—SKETCH OF LADIES' BENEFICENT SOCIETY.....MRS. J. F. CLOSE.
- 6.—ADDRESS.....REV. WM. P. ALCOTT.
- 7.—LETTERS READ.....BY THE PASTOR.
- 8.—HYMN: "The Sweet By and By".....BY THE CHOIR.
- 9.—THE BENEDICTIONREV. MR. ALCOTT.

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HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE

Congregational Church at North Greenwich, Conn.

By *DEA. SILAS H. MEAD.*

A Veteran of Eighty-One Years.

The poet has it :

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."

I think the idea of the poet is easily seen in the history of the North Greenwich Church and Society. It now seems evident it was God's purpose that a meeting-house for His worship should be built on this hill where it now stands. This ridge's first name was Byram Long Ridge; but there was a Quaker who owned a large part of it, and so it was called Quaker Ridge. His name was Marshall, and his house stood a little north-east of where the Academy now stands. A change was to be made. Deacon Obadiah Mead's great-grandfather, by the name of Benjamin Mead, came and settled where he now lives, in 1728. After him, Eliphalet Mead, my wife's great-grandfather, came and settled where Captain Merritt now lives. The next was Silas Mead, my grandfather; he settled a little west of where Selah Savage now lives, in 1741. And then Henry Mead's great-grandfather, by the name of Zebadiah Mead, settled where he now lives. These four men were Christian men, who acted their religion as well as professed it.

For forty years there is no record of admissions to the church in Horseneck, so that the time these men made a profession of religion cannot be stated. I believe my grandfather made a profession at the age of fifteen. All that I can say is, they and my grandfather's wife were members of the church in 1774, at the settlement of Mr. Murdock. These men were farmers, and they came that they might

have more room to live. To give some idea of their adventure, I will give some history of two of them. Silas was told that he could not maintain a Christian character up there, and live peaceably with his neighbors. He replied, "If any man can do it, I can try." I think I have heard him say that the timber was so thick he did not have to draw a single stick for his barn frame, and not more than two or three for his house. It was said of Zebadiah, that he went seven miles to meeting every Sabbath in the year on foot, and overtook the minister every Sabbath between his house and the meeting-house; that when he left his father's house, which stood behind the old white oak tree at Coscob, to think he was going so far into the wilderness, made his mother shed tears.

They were all a go-to-meeting people. They were the only people who regarded the Sabbath, and took the Bible for their guide, within the limits of what is now this church and society. They were hard-working men—they worked six days, and went to church on the Sabbath. Yes, they had to battle with the forest to live, and also for their religion. They had to live like people in a new country. My grandfather lived several years with no other inhabitant in the house but his old bobtailed cat.

Until 1790 there were no other religious people near them. They had no thought of building a meeting-house, nor had they the means. They taught their children industry and prudence, which leads to a competence, and in a particular manner, things relating to eternity. Yes, they brought up their children to reverence the Sabbath, and to attend on the means of grace. They could take their wives or their children on the horse behind them, and go six or seven miles to meeting; or their wives could take a horse alone, and go. I have heard my grandfather say he had a horse he called Old Jolly; he could put a woman's saddle on him, and his wife could get on him, put her arm through the reins, and her hands in her muff, and go; the horse would keep up with the company. Yes, they taught their children, and they their children, and so on down to the third and fourth generation, to fear God and keep His Commandments, and, of course, their property increased, till their posterity owned all Quaker Ridge, and more too. Now, if these men had not set up the standard of piety in this place, this house would never have been built. And I do not see why they do not deserve their full share of praise, if praise belongs to any mortal man. And I do not see why they were not instruments in the affair as much as those who were more immediately engaged in it. It was God's work, and we and they were only His instruments, and neither they nor we had any idea but that we acted as we chose

without any constraint. Certainly, we looked to God for His blessing, but felt no restraint.

And now I will pass on to 1797. These four families had become six. At this time Calvin Mead, of this place, and Joshua Mead, of Round Hill, with his wife, united with the church.

In 1799, the Horseneck Society commenced building a new meeting-house; it was three years in building. It was built by taxing the society; the society lines were fixed by the Legislature. The line ran across Round Hill, just below where Charles W. Knapp now lives, and so across to the river; so the lower part of Round Hill and Quaker Ridge belonged to Horseneck Society. And to show that the people in this region did not want to have their religion at others' expense, they not only paid their full tax, but, when the wall was put on, one went six miles and tended mason all day, and home at night, without charge. And, again: after the house was finished, they wanted a bell. It was not as easy to get a bell then as now, for they had to send to England for it. And then, as I understand it, they could not send the money and get it. So they got Major Hickford, who was an officer in the king's army in the Revolutionary War, and who received a pension from England, to get it for them by way of his pension. He lived where Mrs. Rudd now lives. The bell was paid for by subscription, and principally by the people in this place. These six families lived like Christian neighbors: no lawsuits, no wrangles; each one's interest was strictly separate from the other's. Yet in every case where help was needed, all were ready to help, so far as they could with their hands, without charge. Gilbert Close and his wife, Charlotte, joined the people of God in 1801.

And now I will pass on to the fall of 1816. Then a young man, by the name of Peter Lockwood, came to Horseneck and held evening meetings, while Isaac Lewis, D.D., preached on the Sabbath. There was quite a revival of religion, and several were admitted to the church from this region. In 1817, the Rev. Dr. Lewis, now about seventy years old, felt that he must soon give up his charge as pastor, and thought they could not get another minister for the salary he had. He thought it would be well for them to have a fund, and went through his parish and got such subscriptions as he could for that purpose. He came to this place; and, remembering the bell, the money that was subscribed was on condition that if we ever became a church and society it should come back to us. That shows the subject of building a meeting-house in this place was thought about then, and how much before I do not know.

In 1818, Connecticut formed a new constitution, which did away

with all society lines and everything of the kind. Dr. Lewis resigned his charge, and his son took his place as pastor.

Some time after that Mr. Lewis invited a brother minister (Mr. Haight) to visit this part of the society with him, and finding out the feelings of the people on their return, he told Mr. Lewis there would have to be a meeting-house up here, and he could not help it. Of course, that did not hinder the agitation of the subject at all, but rather increased it. In the fall of 1822, another young man, by the name of Brinsmade, came and held evening meetings, and another revival followed, a great deal larger than the other, when a large number were added to the church, and, of course, a number from this region. So far as we were concerned, the talk about the meeting-house increased. By this time they began to talk of building a Methodist Meeting-house in Round Hill; if that had been built, this would not. Time passed on till after harvest in 1826, and the meeting-house in Round Hill was not built, and the time seemed to have come for action. One man went into his house and asked his wife which she would have first—a new house or a meeting-house. She very promptly replied, “a meeting-house.”

It was not long after that there was notice given that there would be a meeting at the house of Jehial Mead, to take into consideration what should be done in relation to building a meeting-house, and to take such action as was thought best. All were invited who had an interest in it. When the appointed day came, there appeared thirteen persons, from eleven families. There was one spectator who came over seven miles. He said he wanted to see what conclusion we came to. And now we will notice the position we were in.

There was at the east a Congregational Meeting-house in Stanwich, five miles distant; south-east, a Congregational Meeting-house at Horseneck, seven miles distant, to which we belonged; south, a Baptist Meeting-house, four miles distant; south-west, a Quaker Meeting-house, four miles distant; west, a Dutch Reformed, six miles distant; north-west, a Methodist Meeting-house, four miles distant, at North Castle; and north, a Presbyterian Meeting-house, ten miles distant, at Bedford. Those were all the places of worship, only where they crowded into school-houses.

It is easy to be seen it was difficult, for families that had to go on foot, to attend meeting; and, besides, on three sides of us the enemy seemed to be coming in like a flood upon us, and we concluded it was necessary that a standard should be lifted up against him, and voted unanimously that we would build a meeting-house, and

try to support the Gospel here. We appointed our foreman and secretary and treasurer. Then the great topic of conversation was building the meeting-house. As near as I can understand, every one that did not have a hand in it, thought it worse than folly—it was madness. One man said he would give the straw to thatch the roof, but come to the case in hand, he would do nothing. There was a subscription paper circulated in the Mother Society. They gave a little over two hundred dollars—four families gave ninety-five of it. One family was called on, perhaps the most liberal in town, who gave the first donation of any amount, to the benevolent objects of the day. The father, a very good man, subscribed fifteen dollars; and as he hitched back from the table, he said he considered that like so much thrown away; his son put down ten dollars. We went to Mr. Buffett, pastor of Stanwich Church, for counsel. He said if we could count sixty or seventy families, he thought we might venture to go ahead. Yet he helped us all he could; and when he gave up his charge in Stanwich, we leaned on him in every emergency. He acted the part of a father to us as long as he was able.

Although the papers containing the doings of the society were carefully laid up, yet the building of the meeting-house and the support of the minister, so took up our attention that we did not think of these papers until many years had passed away; not until the secretary was dead, and his son, too, and the property went into other hands. When it was thought of, we inquired of the son's widow, who said, in looking over some things, she found a bundle of papers, thought they were of no use, and put them in the fire. So we have no account of the society's doings until the spring of 1828. But we lived not far apart, and could see each other often, and talk the matter over. It was not long before we agreed who we would have for boss-carpenter. He was seen, and it was agreed that he should furnish two men beside himself, and we would furnish three—that would make six. Some time in December he was invited to look at Stanwich Meeting-house, it being nearest the size we wanted to build. He made out a bill of timber for the house, to be thirty-eight by fifty feet. The bill was circulated round to every and any one who would get a stick, until it was all taken. The night after we got the bill we had a fall of snow, and had good sledding till nearly every stick was drawn. I think the snow began to soften and the last few sticks stuck a little. So we were favored, and everything went on charmingly.

After we began to get the timber on the ground, one of the mothers said we ought to have a prayer-meeting; and we had it.

There was but one of the fathers who was a professor of religion ; and he being a little advanced in life and not used to taking lead in meetings, it fell on us boys. We had our meetings at the four houses nearest together. The mothers came, and brought their husbands and children with them ; and in looking over since, I have asked myself, why did they come ? It could not be to be interested in the exercises, and I am sure they did not come to criticise. No ; it must have been to unite and help ask God's blessing ; and they had it. The first of March, on the day appointed, the carpenters came. Invitation had been given to all who would help score the timber, and we had a lively day.

There was a team on the ground, and the boss had all he could do to get the sticks in proper position to be hewed, and line them ; the carpenters had nothing to do but hew. I believe the timber was all scored without charge. It was then fashionable for mechanics to board where they did their work, and the six families living nearest by agreed to board them, taking them a week at a time, and so round and round again until the house was finished. The names of the families were Obadiah Mead, Jehial Mead, Darius Mead, Levi Mead, Calvin Mead and Silas H. Mead. There was no charge made for anything we could do. We had no distilled liquor about the building. When lime was wanted for the walls, one went to Ridgefield and engaged it, and we went in our wagons and brought it in one day. The house was covered with cedar shingles ; Gilbert Close had them shaved at his own expense.

And so the summer passed away prosperously, and the earth brought forth by handfuls, and thus we were prospered on every hand. The question was several times asked, "How large a congregation we expected to have?" It was answered, "Perhaps thirty, to begin with." We had hopes we could do our neighbors good. Our congregation the first winter was one hundred and forty. We had the house finished, painted, furnished, paid for, dedicated, and a church organized, on Christmas-day, 1827.

We had a minister engaged, Chauncey Wilcox, and he preached for us the next Sabbath, and we have had meetings here every Sabbath since, except when the snowbanks prevented. We had a prosperous winter, our church nearly doubled. We organized with eighteen members : One from Stanwich, Hannah (Close), wife of Lewis Mead ; two from Round Hill, Rebecca (Holly), wife of Seymour Hobby, and Sarah (Knapp), wife of Isaac Peck ; the rest from this place. Calvin Mead and Deborah (Mead), his wife ; Hannah (Peck), wife of Darius Mead ; Abigail (Rundle), wife of Levi Mead ; Obadiah Mead and Alla (Mead), his wife ; Luther

Mead and Annis (Mead), his wife; Thirza (Mead), widow of James Palmer; William Lounsberry, Lewis Mead, Silas H. Mead, Huldah Mead, Heman Mead and Susan Lounsberry.

There is no city or village near. Then there were not more than seven families that respected the Sabbath within a mile of the meeting-house. There have been 436 persons who have belonged to this church: 18 to begin with, 118 added by letter, and 300 by profession. We have dismissed to other churches 194, buried 86, dismissed by discipline 14. There are now 142 members. As near as I can make out, of the 300 added by profession, 184 were 25 years old or under; of these, 158 were 20 years old or under, and many 15 years or under; quite a number 10 years old or under; the youngest, between 6 and 7. That little girl has sustained a Christian character for forty-six years, and I am not afraid to challenge any one to bring aught against her Christian character; and it is my opinion she will hold on to the end of life. There have been four members of this church who went as missionaries, under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, to the Sandwich Islands; three who entered the ministry; four who married ministers.

We have had no assistance from the Home Missionary Society, but have always contributed to the benevolent institutions of the day. I do not think we ought to claim more than forty families that have any of our members in them. A large part of the grown people who come to our meeting on the Sabbath are members of the church. We have used no alcoholic wine in the church since 1850; but we use the fruit of the vine, and not the fruit of fermentation.

We have had six pastors:

CHAUNCEY WILCOX, ordained June 25th, 1828, dismissed May 5th, 1846, died, aged 55, Jan. 31st, 1852.

FREDERICK MUNSON, ordained Sept. 22d, 1847, dismissed April 22d, 1856.

JOHN BLOOD, installed Nov. 11th, 1856, dismissed Oct. 12th, 1858.

WILLIAM H. KNOUSE, ordained May 4th, 1859, dismissed May 3d, 1863.

WILLIAM P. ALCOTT, ordained Feb. 18th, 1868, dismissed Aug. 4th, 1874.

ALPHEUS WINTER, installed June 27th, 1876.

Also two acting pastors:

LEMUEL S. POTWIN, from Sept. 4th, 1863, till March 1st, 1865.

SOLOMON R. SCHOFIELD, from May 2d, 1865, till May 1st, 1867.

We have had three deacons, all of whom are now living:

SILAS H. MEAD, ordained Dec. 25th, 1827.

OBADIAH MEAD, ordained Sept. 28th, 1828.

JOSIAH WILCOX, ordained Sept. 2d, 1864.

Two hundred and eighty-one different ministers have preached in this house: Five Episcopalians, five Baptists, eighteen Methodists, one Quakeress, and one Jew; the rest Congregationalist, Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed.

Our Sabbath-school was organized some time in April, 1828, in a building some sixty rods west of the meeting-house, with Heman Mead for superintendent, and continued in that building till the fall, when it was removed to the meeting-house. This school, we have had good reason to believe, has been a benefit to outsiders as well as ourselves.

Lessons from the History of the Congregational
Church, North Greenwich, Conn.

A SERMON:

Preached by its Pastor, REV. ALPHEUS WINTER.

1 KINGS, viii. 57, 58: "The Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers; let Him not leave us, nor forsake us; that He may incline our hearts unto Him, to walk in all His ways, and His statutes, and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers."

The very admirable Historical Sketch which our venerable deacon has just read to us—and which he was qualified to prepare as no other man on the face of the earth was qualified, because he has been an office-bearer in this church from its very beginning—relieves me from the necessity of dealing with the details of its history, as otherwise I should be constrained to do. I am thankful that he has been able and willing to do this work so well; and I esteem it most fortunate that those interesting facts have been put into proper shape for preservation ere the only one who could give them transfers his membership in the church militant to the Church triumphant.

It seems to me now that the proper thing for me to attempt in this discourse, is to draw practical lessons from the history of this church.

Considering *all* of the circumstances which have surrounded it, this has been a *successful* church. God has wonderfully blessed it; but, He has blessed it in the use of means, and in accordance with the eternal principles of His divine government. So, it can but be profitable to consider what means, what principles, the Almighty has owned, honored and blessed, in making this a successful church.

I. THIS CHURCH WAS FOUNDED AND HAS BEEN SUSTAINED BY PRAYER.

There is no other fact more significant in the account we have had of the origin of this church, than that concerning those little prayer-meetings that were held from house to house, ere this house of worship was built. Disbelieve it who may, I can but believe, as I call to mind what is enunciated in the Holy Word concerning God's willingness to hear and answer prayer, that no little of the early success of this church, in that it became firmly established on this hill-top, is directly traceable to the mighty power obtained in those little prayer-meetings. And all along the fifty years of its history, there have been many "*righteous*" men and women connected with it, whose "*effective, fervent*" prayers have availed—who shall tell how much?—for the prosperity of this Zion.

The Revelator tells us of "*Golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints.*" We do not know how many of those vials have been filled with the prayers which, during the past fifty years, have ascended from the saints in North Greenwich, as they have bowed before the Lord their God in their closets, at their family altars, in social prayer-meetings, and in this more public place of prayer. If we did, I am confident we should understand, as we do not now, how it is that in the midst of so many discouragements, over so many difficulties, and against such great obstacles, this church has achieved so much prosperity. Oh! what a merciful manifestation of the Divine goodness is it, that the all-powerful God allows His weak and erring children, by faith, to use His power for the accomplishment of good ends.

Brethren, thus God gives us to see, to-day, not only what has been the primary element in the past success of our beloved church, but, also, if we desire a continuance of the blessings of God upon it, we must continue faithfully and perseveringly to besiege the Throne of Grace in its behalf: "*Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.*"

II. THE FOUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS OF THIS CHURCH SPARED NEITHER TIME, MONEY NOR LABOR IN BUILDING IT UP.

That little band of thirteen persons, representing only eleven families, which met in the house where Captain Merritt now lives, a little more than fifty years ago, and resolved to build a house of worship in this place, was constituted of heroes and heroines; and they were none the less so because they were unconscious of their

heroism. They possessed that spirit of consecration which made them spiritually heroic; for it was by faith in God they were enabled to be so courageous. Having dedicated themselves to the blessed work to which, no doubt, the Almighty called them, how they toiled and sacrificed and labored to achieve their object! No discouragements caused them to despond; no difficulties disheartened them; none of the many lions they found in the way caused them to lose their courage! Thus, they demonstrated that their prayers had been sincere; for thus it has ever been in the history of Christianity, when it has been successful, faith has been united to works; prayer has gone hand in hand with effort. So God has ordained that His blessed cause on the earth shall be carried forward.

Thank God! the spirit of the fathers was transmitted to the sons; so much so that I believe it to be an indisputable fact that, in all the history of this church, the prevailing, controlling spirit of its membership has been the willingness to give all needed time, money and labor to carry on the work of the Lord, not only in this parish, but throughout the world.

I am sorry that there are no means of ascertaining accurately the aggregate of the benevolent contributions of this church and people during the past fifty years. Judging by what has been done during the three years I have been here, I feel sure that it would be creditable, and compare favorably with any church and congregation in the State of similar resources.

It should be borne in mind that all of the money which has been so liberally contributed here for the support of Gospel institutions, both at home and abroad, has been the product of the industry, thrift and economy of this people; that is to say, they have had little or no help from outside of this parish. It gives me peculiar pleasure to state that this people has not been in the habit of raising money by the questionable means of fairs, festivals, etc., and their still more questionable accessories. Moreover, in these days when it is so fashionable to have church buildings ornamented by elaborate mortgages, I am glad to add that this church and society are so *old-fashioned* as to have no debt.

With joyful hearts, on this day of jubilee, we recognize the cheering fact that all of this toil and sacrifice has not been in vain in the Lord. The good Father has graciously heard and answered the prayers of this people, and kindly accepted the sacrifices they have offered Him.

It is no small achievement that in such a place as this, with no village, a sparsely settled region of country, and of late years so many other churches to divide the blessed work with it, there

have been gathered into this church 436 souls, and 300 of them on profession of their faith in Christ.

Probably not another church in the country can boast truthfully of one fact which is true of this church, viz.: Of all the many of its members who, in the providence of God, have been called to move so far away from it as to be practically beyond its watch and care, not more than *one* has failed to take a letter to some other church; and we are not without hope that that one will either return to us, or take his letter. So, of all that large number who have gone away from this church, *not one has been lost to the Church of Christ*. Oh, my dear Christian friends! While, in view of this record—the fruit of patient toil and hopeful sacrifice—we may consistently rejoice to-day, and heartily thank God for all His mercies to this people, ought we not, also, to take courage, reconsecrate ourselves to the Lord, and resolve to press on in the same heroic, self-sacrificing, aye, *Christian* way the fathers did, so that the rich blessings of God may continue to fall abundantly on this vine, which we trust His own right hand did plant?

At least, the spirit of King Solomon's prayer, as expressed in our text, I trust is in our hearts: "*The Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers; let Him not leave us, nor forsake us, that He may incline our hearts unto Him, to walk in all His ways, and His statutes, and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers.*"

III. THIS CHURCH HAS EVER BEEN FRIENDLY TO MORAL REFORM.

There are two theories concerning the duty of a Christian Church in regard to the evils which afflict society. One is, that it should be non-committal, lest somebody should be offended, and thus the Gospel hindered. The other is, that the Church is a *light* in a dark world, and that, therefore, it ought to take position against all wrong, that so it may *enlighten* the world. I understand that the latter theory is in accordance with the instructions of our blessed Saviour, and I have been glad to learn that such has been the position of this church.

Concerning the anti-slavery cause, if I am correctly informed, leading spirits in this church espoused it very early in its history, and that as early as any church in this region, the prevailing sentiment of this church was in favor of it.

The temperance cause, from its first beginning, found ardent friends in this church. It has thrilled my soul to hear how faith

and nerve, yes, and *muscle*, too, were tried by the determination that the frame of this house should be raised without ardent spirits; and how the right triumphed in the hands of men who were not weakened and half-crazed by alcohol. From that time to the present, the faith of this people in the safe and sensible doctrine of total abstinence from all intoxicating liquors has been strengthening, until almost all of the members of this church have taken the pledge. No other church with which I am acquainted presents so nearly an united front to King Alcohol as does this church. I rejoice exceedingly over this fact; for I do most sincerely believe that nothing else is so hindering the cause of Christ as the evils which grow out of the manufacture, sale and use of intoxicating liquors; and that the next great moral conflict in this country is to be on this liquor question. Suffer me to amend that last sentence: **THE GREATEST, GRAVEST QUESTION BEFORE THIS AMERICAN PEOPLE FOR SETTLEMENT IS THIS LIQUOR QUESTION!** I would that the Christian Church, as a whole, might be arrayed on the side of right. If it could be, the battle would be soon decided.

To show that this church has not been backward in taking very radical ground on the temperance question, I will relate a little incident connected with the commencement of my ministry here. Several years ago I became thoroughly convinced that it is wrong to use alcoholic wine in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and made a sort of a vow that, though I *had* served churches which used it for that sacred purpose, I would not do so again. But, somehow, I made an engagement to serve this church two years without thinking of that matter. After I had moved my family here, and the time for a Communion season approached, my vow occurred to me, and I was somewhat troubled in my mind about it. I thought it exceedingly improbable that that subject had been agitated here, and it seemed not likely that a change could at once be effected. Nevertheless, I proceeded to make inquiries concerning the matter, in as careful and delicate a manner as I could, and learned to my grateful surprise that *fermented wine had not been used on this Communion Table since 1850*. Thus I made the usual profit of borrowing trouble.

I think it must be obvious to any candid mind at all conversant with the history of this church, that it has not suffered because it has been friendly to moral reforms. I trust that in all its future it will ever be inclined to take a fair and square position on all moral questions which may affect the welfare of society.

IV. THIS HAS BEEN A PATRIOTIC CHURCH.

As in no other country on the face of the earth, it is a Christian duty, in this country, to take an interest in the welfare of the nation. According to the principles on which our government is administered, the people are the rulers. Every voter in this land is a king. If then, as the Apostle Paul teaches, civil government is a divine institution, how grave is the responsibility which rests upon every Christian who is a voter. I cannot conceive how any Christian man can take the freeman's oath, as it is administered in this State, and not feel that henceforth he must take an intelligent and active part in politics, in the best sense of that much-abused word.

I have satisfied myself that the people who have been connected with this church and congregation, have discharged their duty in this direction quite as well as Christian people usually do.

But a time came, something more than fifteen years ago, when those who loved their country were called upon to do more than drop a piece of paper into a ballot-box in its behalf—when, to save our beloved nation, it was necessary that the fondest ties and holiest associations should be broken, that so thousands of men might peril health, morals and life in the camp and on the battlefield, to save our good government from destruction by wicked traitors. In the Rev. Dr. Linsley's Historical Discourse, at the celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Second Church, I find this passage: "I wish to say that, in this matter, the record of this church and congregation, and I may add, of the other churches in this town, is one of which we have no reason to be ashamed. We sent forth, to strengthen the hands of the government and save the nation, our proportion of good and true men. I am not aware that any of them 'turned back in the day of battle,' or brought a stain upon themselves or their friends; but I know that the 10th Connecticut, to which Greenwich contributed its share, both of officers and men, won fair laurels on every field of conflict where duty called, and made for themselves a noble record—a record as enduring as the eternal hills on which we stand."

From this church and congregation there went forth into that conflict *twenty-nine* good men and true.

The following is the

ROLL OF HONOR.

ISAAC O. CLOSE, Lieutenant, in Co. I, 10th Connecticut Regiment.

WM. L. SAVAGE, " " " " " "

PAUL B. FERRIS, Sergeant, " " " " " "

WM. N. SALTER, " " " " " "

JOSEPH E. BIXBY, Corporal, " " " " " "

WILLIS H. WILCOX, " " " " " "

JARED B. FINCH, Private, " " " " " "

WM. H. FERRIS, " " " " " "

AMOS W. HUSTED, " " " " " "

CHARLES HOYT, " " " " " "

JAMES GERALD, " " " " " "

ALEX. HENDERSON, " " " " " "

WM. RUTHERFORD, " " " " " "

SILAS E. MEAD, " " " " " "

JOHN W. FERRIS, " " " " " "

WM. A. ROBBINS, " " " " " "

GEORGE MOORE, " " " " " "

DAVID W. MEAD, Lieutenant, in Co. I, 17th Connecticut Regiment.

WM. PLATT, Private, " " " " " "

WM. PURDY, " " " " " "

JOHN A. LOUDEN, Private, " " " " " "

ALBERT KINCH, " " " " " "

*DR. J. W. HYDE, Lieutenant, in 29th Connecticut (Colored) Reg't.

WM. O. MILLS, Private, " " " " " "

FLOYD T. MILLS, " " " " " "

RICHARD PARTLOW, Private, in Co. H, 28th Connecticut Regiment.

WM. LOUDEN, Private, in 5th New York Artillery.

HENRY DAYTON, Private, in 49th New York.

SILAS S. DOWNES, Corporal, in Co. B, 17th New York.

Six of these gave their precious lives a sacrifice for their country.

" On fame's eternal camping ground
Their silent tents are spread,
And glory guards, with solemn sound,
The bivouac of the dead ! "

I could wish that a suitable monument stood in yonder cemetery as a token of how this people fondly cherish the memory of the dear "boys in blue" who made such a noble sacrifice. But it were still better if the sacred memory of their heroism and devotion shall stimulate us all to ever love the dear old flag for which they died, as they loved it.

V. THIS CHURCH HAS FAVORED AND BEEN BUILT UP BY REVIVALS OF RELIGION.

From the very beginning it has pleased God to cause His Church in the earth to grow principally by means of "*times of refreshing*" * * * "*from the presence of the Lord.*" I do not know why He has so ordered; I only know that such is the fact. So, if any one will find fault with, or oppose revivals of religion, let him understand that he is arraying himself against God. So far as there has been an admixture of fanaticism and evil in such works of grace, be sure they are of human origin; and, when one thinks what poor, weak and sinful instruments the Lord has to work with in His churches, the wonder is that so little harm has come during such seasons of unusual religious interest.

Commencing with the beginning of the preaching of the good news in this house, God has been pleased to grant unto this church numerous and very precious works of grace. It requires but a glance at our Manual to see that the most of those who have joined this church have come in flocks; that very few, comparatively, have come in singly, or as the result of no special religious interest.

What a blessed fact it is that God has been so good as to close up the first fifty years of the history of this church with a most precious time of refreshing; so that while we were in the midst of our preparations for this Celebration, we had to turn aside to engage in the still more joyful work of gathering, or assisting to gather, some scores of souls into the kingdom of our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Inasmuch as the attitude of this church towards revivals of religion has ever been favorable, and as a consequence of the cherishing of a spirit of willingness to promote them, it has been richly blessed by them, I do hope and trust that it will be encouraged ever to regard them favorably, so that in the years to come, as during those which are past, the Holy Spirit may not only distil upon this community like the gentle dew, in connection with the regular means of grace, but frequently it may come down "like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth."

I am aware of only one reflection that can tinge our festivities to-day with sadness. It is *not* that two-thirds of the original members of this church, and many, many more of those who joined it later in its history, have passed on to glory. If it be true that death is an enemy, it is also true that the Lion of the Tribe of Judah destroys that enemy for all those who believe in Him. So, notwithstanding that the grave looks dark and cheerless to the

faithless eye because He was laid in it, Jesus Christ made it, for every true follower of Him, the radiant vestibule to supernal bliss. So, though we cannot, in our human weakness, think of the loved ones gone without the thickly-gathering tears to moisten our eyes, we cannot sorrow in our hearts, when we reflect that they are wearing "white robes" now; they are waving conquering palms, they are striking golden harps, as they walk blissfully the streets of the New Jerusalem.

Let others think as they may, *I* can but fondly hope that the departed are permitted to continue their interest in the affairs of earth. Could our eyes be opened, as were those of the young man, the servant of Elisha, I should not be surprised if we should recognize a goodly company of those who have toiled and sacrificed and prayed for this church, but who have passed on before, rejoicing with us to-day over the completion of a glorious half century of its history. May there not be truth in the lines of Tennyson, where he sings of the departed?—

"They do not die,
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, altho' they change."

Only *six* of the original members of this church still linger in mortal form; but so bowed with years and infirmities, that but *one* of them can be with us to-day. I am sure we should all feel happier if these venerated friends were here.

The roll of these worthies is as follows:

HEMAN MEAD, aged 72, once the Superintendent of the Sabbath-school connected with this church, now living in Morristown, N. J.

MRS. ALLA MEAD, aged 79, still in good bodily health, but her mind in an eclipse that probably will not pass away till she sees "the King in His beauty."

DEACON SILAS H. MEAD, aged 81, and able to be with us to-day, to do good service.

MRS. THIRZA M. PALMER, aged 86, with mind gone, except the part of it which enables her still to be a graceful lady.

MRS. ANNIS MEAD, aged 88, living in Greenwich, Huron County, Ohio, and from whom we shall hear, by letter, this afternoon.

DEACON OBADIAH MEAD, aged 92 years and 9 months, who has been able to be in his place, in this sanctuary, till within a few weeks, every Sabbath, but who, to-day, can almost see the boatman who is to ferry him over to the shores of Bright Deliverance.

THE SALUTATION OF THE MOTHER CHURCH.

By Rev. CHARLES R. TREAT, its Pastor.

An occasion like this which calls us together to-day, when the past and the present join hands and look into each other's faces, is of more than ordinary interest. For the time, the cares of the present and the hopes of the future are out of mind, and the past, hitherto forgotten, or remembered with indifference, becomes the absorbing theme of speech and meditation.

It is a wise and beneficent feature of God's providence that this should come to pass. Much of the past ought not to be forgotten. It would be well if it were remembered better and more often than it is, and when the anniversaries of eventful days recur, it is a matter for mutual congratulation and for thanksgiving to God. Eventful days in the lives of individuals, families, churches or nations, though we call them "the days of small things," are far more truly the days of great things. They are the days when the foundation is laid, nay, when the corner-stone is put into its place, and as the superstructure depends for strength, for the duration of its usefulness and beauty, upon the foundation, and, more than all others, upon the corner-stone, so do the usefulness and glory of the structure, civil or ecclesiastical, depend upon the faithfulness and skill with which its foundation and corner-stone are laid. This character would I have you give the "day we celebrate." I would have you mark, as you pass in rapid review these fifty years, how well this structure ecclesiastical has stood; how firm, staunch, defiant of destruction or decay it is, and thus give worthy honor to those faithful servants of the Master, who, fifty years ago, made a day eventful in the calendar of the church.

In presenting to you the Salutation of the Mother Church, as you have asked me to do, I feel embarrassed by the relation I seem to bear to so old a child. It is in the fitness of things that he who represents the mother of so mature a daughter, should himself be crowned with the glory of whitened locks, and stand before you venerable and venerated for his long life-time of loving labor. Far better would it be if one of the sainted dead who preceded me in the pastoral office—if Isaac Lewis, the father or the son, or

Noah Coe, or Joel Linsley—could be here to speak their own and their church's salutation. How the hearts of many who knew them living, and listened to them, as the words of hope and life fell from their faithful lips, would leap within them to hear again the voice, and see again the face, that they loved so well! If this might be, then to the Salutation of the Mother Church on earth would be added the salutation of the Mother of us all—the Church of the Firstborn in heaven.

But, if the dead may not come back to speak to us, surely the living are within our reach, and I much regret that, of the two surviving pastors of the Mother Church, one, at least, is not with us. Of these, if the Rev. Joel Mann had been able to be here, how nobly he would discharge this duty! For his ministry in Greenwich extended nearly to the time when your separate history began, and his active labors in the Master's service much more than cover the fifty years, whose completion we commemorate to-day. He could stand before you crowned with glory and honor, and worthily represent the mother and extend to you, the daughter, a truly paternal salutation and benediction.

I have another occasion for regret to-day. The church that is older than all the others is not represented here. This ought not so to be. If we are the Mother Church, she is in some sense the grandmother; and if it be fitting that the mother bring her greeting to the daughter, it is also fitting that the grandmother bring her greeting, too. Yet, as I so speak, I doubt whether I am correct in calling her your grandmother. For, jealous as I am bound to be of the rights and dignities of the church to which I minister, I can hardly acquiesce in such a claim. As you search the record, the First Church appears to be, at best, the older sister of the Second Church. They had no right, civil or ecclesiastical, to call themselves a church until 1707; and we in Horseneck applied to the State Assembly for authority to form a "Church Estate" in 1706. We did not take advantage of the authority then granted to us. I know not why. We waited until 1716, then applied for authority again, and then became a church. So, only by neglect to use the power that had been asked and given, did the church in old Greenwich anticipate us in their ecclesiastical organization, and between their date and ours there is, at most, a difference in their favor of only nine years. Am I not right, then, in calling her the older sister? It were preposterous to call her the mother church of ours, or the grandmother of yours, in any strict signification of the word.

The history of the half century, preceding these dates of organizations, confirms what I have said. Old Greenwich was settled first,

but Horseneck was settled soon afterward. In Old Greenwich, a house of worship was first erected and religious services first held; but at Horseneck religious services were also held not long afterward, and when occasion called for it, a house of worship was also built.

However, this is not the time, nor have I the zeal for any controversy over the name and relation which the First Church in Greenwich shall bear to us or to you. As our mother or elder sister, as your grandmother or great aunt, she would be welcomed here to-day, as a dearly loved member of the family to which we all belong. She is not here to speak her salutation, or share in these delightful recollections, and I am sorry for her absence, for your sake and for hers.

As I approach the special theme which you have to-day assigned me, I cannot but express my satisfaction and congratulation for what I have learned concerning the foundation of this church. I see the explanation now of your prosperity; I can understand now why the Great Head of the Church has shown such signal favor unto you. In prayer, in faith, this work was undertaken; upon ground already consecrated by your prayers, already sealed with the Master's approval, you reared your material and spiritual temple. Here, as you have gathered for the worship of the Most High God, you have dedicated yourselves to His holy service. Here, too, as the years have come and gone, you have maintained the preaching of the Word; you have continued in prayer and in the breaking of the Holy Bread. Here you have cherished the love of perishing souls, and here have you sought with your "substance" to "honor the Lord," while you have therewith spread widely abroad the "words of this life," to those who were "ignorant" and "out of the way." This is the secret of spiritual success, and I have been made glad as I have heard again, to-day, the oft-told tale, how he that "goeth forth, and weepeth, bearing precious seed, comes again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

From these refreshing reminiscences I will draw my salutation. In behalf of the Mother Church, I congratulate you upon your bright and happy past. We would have our greeting be to assure you that, as we review your history, as we recall these fifty years, familiar to us almost as they are to you, you seem to us to have "fought a good fight," and to have "kept the faith." We are not ready yet to say that you have "finished" your "course." We hope that you will complete this century in Christian service, which you have so well begun, and that then another century of service, and yet another, and yet another, will be vouchsafed to you. We hope

that the Lord will never remove His "candlestick" out of this place so long as there shall be any darkness here into which His light should shine. And, as we know not how to judge of the future but by the past, we are confident, and we joyfully declare this confidence to you, that when your course shall have been finished, when the

" One far-off Divine event,
To which the whole creation moves,"

shall be fully come, then the Lord, who will have marked how you have "borne," and have had "patience," and "for His name's sake," have "labored," and have not "fainted," will, as the Righteous Judge, place upon the brow of you, our daughter, the "crown of righteousness"—the crown that "fadeth not away." Unto His favor and His faithfulness, we now, as fifty years ago, again commend you !

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

By Mr. SELAH SAVAGE, Superintendent.

The Sunday-school connected with the North Greenwich Church was organized in a building which stood opposite the house where S. Savage now lives, in the spring of 1828, and continued to be held there until the weather became too cold to meet without a fire. Some of the older people recollect going from the church to the above-named place to Sunday-school, and that the room was made ready on Saturday by cleaning out and arranging the benches.

The first record which can be found states that the school was re-organized April, 1829. There were present fourteen teachers and forty-two scholars. Mr. Heman Mead was the first superintendent, and held the position until he left for college. Deacon Obadiah Mead was then chosen, and held the place until the spring of 1832. Selah Savage was then appointed, and has been chosen annually, and served until the present time as superintendent, with the exception of two brief portions of time, when Josiah Wilcox was superintendent.

As I stand here to-day and review the scenes through which we have passed as a Sunday-school these forty-five years, I am ready to exclaim, "What hath God wrought?" The school has

been blessed in all the revivals that have blessed the church. I believe all the original members of the church have been connected with this school at one time or another.

Of those who have been admitted to this church by confession of their faith, two hundred and fifty have been, either before or after, members of this school. We know that some, and probably many others, have united with churches of other denominations. The school has labored together very harmoniously, and our united labors, by God's blessing, have not been in vain. Souls have here been awakened to a sense of their great need, and have learned the way to Christ, and we have been permitted to rejoice over their conversion to the truth. We trust that many who once sat on these seats, and with us learned the way of life, are to-day worshipping in the Temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, while they render a purer and nobler service unto their Saviour, and our Saviour, without sin and in fullness of joy, which shall be forevermore.

There are now living thirteen teachers who taught in 1832, and only one (Deacon Wilcox) is now a teacher in this school. Some from this school entered the ministry and became preachers of the Gospel. Five went as missionaries and teachers to the Sandwich Islands. One has planted the standard of the Cross in North-western New York, among the Indians of that region. Thus, the influence started in this little Sunday-school has flowed out to cheer and gladden other and far-distant lands. None of us can know in this life the full results of what has and will be accomplished by the efforts here put forth in the Master's name. To Him be all the glory!

The present number connected with the school is four officers, seventeen teachers and ninety-six scholars. With this number, having Jesus for our Captain, and the Holy Spirit for our efficient helper, "having our loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace, taking the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," we propose to enter upon the next half century of labor with the hope and expectation of achieving more and greater results than we have witnessed in the past!

SKETCH OF LADIES' BENEFICENT SOCIETY.

By Mrs. J. F. CLOSE.

The Ladies' Beneficent Society, connected with the North Greenwich Church, was organized in 1848. The following officers were chosen: 1st Directress, Mrs. Mary Purdy; 2d Directress, Miss Huldah Mead; Treasurer, Miss Lucinda Mead; Secretary, Mrs. Silas D. Mead.

For the years 1849, 1850, 1851, Miss Huldah Mead was chosen 1st Directress; Mrs. Silas Husted, 2d Directress.

In 1852, Mrs. Silas Husted, 1st Directress; and in 1855, Mrs. Silas D. Mead, 2d Directress; which offices they have held unto the present time.

Miss Lucinda Mead held the office of Secretary and Treasurer until 1867, when she was succeeded by Miss Myrtilla P. Mead, for two years; Mrs. Obadiah M. Knapp, for one year; Mrs. Wm. P. Alcott, for one year; and, in 1871, by Mrs. J. F. Close.

The object of this Society, as its name indicates, is doing good. The name was suggested by Rev. F. Munson, who was at that time our pastor, when the ladies proposed calling it the Benevolent Society, which he said merely indicated that they were *willing* to do good, while he considered they were doing good.

We have not given our money to the missions, as they do in the Mother Church. We felt that we needed it at home; and from time to time, as our church needed to be refurnished or painted, the ladies are called on, and are always glad when their funds are sufficient to pay expenses.

The Bible on the desk, the bell that calls us to church, the window-blinds, the lamps, the carpets and cushions, the furniture, the stoves, were all paid for by the Ladies' Society.

We have had but one fair, and with the proceeds of that, the organ was purchased. We have never disposed of any articles that were made in our Society, by shares or lottery, but kind friends have purchased them; or sometimes we have sold them by subscription, and designated to whom they should be given.

May our Society live as long as the church, and accomplish as much in the future as in the past!

O

AN ADDRESS.

By Rev. WM. P. ALCOTT.

BROTHERS, SISTERS, AND FRIENDS:

I came not here to make a speech, much less in my sole self to represent six or seven "former pastors." I came rejoicing rather in the opportunity to take by the hand and look in the face so many of my dear people, and so many friends from neighboring churches. I came to praise God with you for the past, to look forward to the future of this church with hope, and with confidence to anticipate our final gathering into the heavenly Jerusalem.

My personal acquaintance here runs back through only the last of these five decades. Ten years ago, the 14th of December, I first saw this parish. The weather then bore no resemblance to this. If that was winter, this is surely summer. The day before my coming a snow-storm had suspended railroad communication between Boston and New York; I came from the former city by the first train through. Mr. S. D. Mead met me at Greenwich and brought me up here, for it was then, as it is still, "up," nearly all the way. We found many deep snow-drifts, but at length gained "the Ridge," and passed in the gathering darkness your parsonage, dark and desolate against the sky, its sentinel evergreens loaded with fleecy snow. I knew not then what a "sunny side" it would be to me, nor, in some respects, what a "shady side." Just before reaching his house, Mr. Mead ran into a snow-drift, and, partially overturning the sleigh, tipped me out, and gave me a pretty thorough immersion. I never supposed this was intentional, but I have no doubt Mr. Mead was interested to see how the young candidate would meet such adversity. However, I was soon warming myself before the blazing open fire of his hospitable sitting-room.

Shortly, I received a "call" to settle here; and, on February 18th, I was made your pastor. Throughout, that winter was one of great snows and drifts. The morning of my ordination found the roads impassable to ordinary conveyances, and the people came on *fourteen ox sleds*, some of which took the ministers and delegates to their

dinner at Mr. Savage's. Another unusual procedure was necessary. Dr. Linsley, of Greenwich, the only ministerial delegate "on time," after long delay, by some manœuvering, effected the organization of a temporary council, with himself as moderator, and proceeded to examine my theology. The other ministers were unable to arrive till after twelve o'clock. A consociation was then formally organized, and after a few questions, Dr. Linsley's report was accepted, and my examination was sustained. Had my questioner been more leisurely, I might never have become your pastor. As it was, Dr. Linsley laid his hands upon my head, and I was ordained.

Of the happy years I spent among you I will not particularly speak. The presence of the Spirit was often manifest. At most of the Communion services there were additions to the church. The early months of 1872 were especially blessed. Our friend, Rev. Almon Underwood, happily present to-day, labored among us, and one of the marked revivals of the church occurred. Many of those then gathered in are now among your most honored and trusted members; others have gone home. While I was here, the interior of this house was made what it now is by painting, frescoing, remodeling the pulpit and uniformly cushioning the seats. I will not dwell longer on the history of those years, but pass to topics of a more general nature.

In Mr. Winter's admirable sermon, nothing was said of the relation of this church to the cause of education. (By the way, I hope that Sermon, and Deacon Mead's Historical Sketch, will be printed. The latter, especially, contains facts which will be of value in the future, but which may soon be lost unless copies are thus multiplied. Our Congregational libraries, and all of us, will be glad to have these papers printed). This church has always taken a deep interest in common-schools, the diffusion of knowledge, and all educational matters. Early in his ministry, Mr. Wilcox received boarders, and taught school in the parsonage. Later, the North Greenwich Academy was incorporated, and the present building erected, in which Mr. Wilcox taught for a time, and for which special masters were afterwards hired. For many years this school was large and flourishing; in it the church always took a deep interest. Not only did many of your children here obtain their higher education, but many came from abroad, and some who thus came made their subsequent home among you. Revivals often visited the school: Thus the church and academy were a mutual blessing.

Another characteristic of this people, not specially noticed, has been the unusual prevalence of family religion. The six (or eleven)

families that united in the formation of this church, evidently served God at home. Hence, their desire for a house where their children, the feeble and all, might meet for united praises. Much as we love the Sabbath-school, we all feel that if it is to excuse parents and guardians from teaching religion *at the knee, on the knee*, and by the fireside, it is no blessing. There has been little of this negligence here. Down to the present time, but few households fail to call on the name of God around the domestic altar.

In the sermon it was implied that the religion of this people has been pre-eminently a religion of *principle*. I have heard Deacon Hervey Mead say that of such timbers was this meeting-house put together, and so firmly was it framed, that he believed "if the wind should blow strong enough it might roll it over and over, down Quaker Ridge, without its going to pieces." A religion of principle is like that. One of feeling or expediency, on the other hand, will melt before the storm like a common house. There is value in feelings of penitence or peace. But if we begin and continue doing God's will, in the right time He will give so much of these as we need. Oh, how vastly stronger our nation would be if all its religion was the religion of principle! A few families felt that there *ought* to be a church here; so they built one. They consecrated to it their time, their property—themselves; and by living sacrifices maintained to this day public worship. This community has ever been a peculiarly scattered one. Here at its centre there is no village. What settlements there are, you find around the circumference of the parish. In such a thinly-settled region, often nothing but principle, or habit which has grown out of it, will bring people to meeting. For I assure you they do not always have such weather as this on these hills. There have always been a large proportion of men, women, families, who are always in their place, and on whom the minister can always count, even in stormy weather. Their faithfulness, under God, has kept the altar fire ever burning, and made it unusually rare for a single religious service here to go by default.

Men and women have grown up on these farms, not as they do in cities, but independently, thinking for themselves, and becoming very firm and unalterable in their convictions. They have grown as do the solitary oaks of their hills. How is it that a church has lived for fifty years among such a people? There has been friction often; even, sometimes, iron will has met iron will. God and religious principle have carried this church through storms in which nothing weaker could have preserved it. My young friends, who are entering on a new life in this time of revival, what *you* need is

this same entire and everlasting consecration to duty, principle, doing the will of God in storm, as well as in sunshine.

We also see that Godliness is profitable for the life that now is as well as for that which is to come. I know that in one sense you are not rich. But you are well-housed, well-clothed, your tables are loaded. There are few very poor here. You are abundantly supplied with mental food, you are hospitable, you are long-lived. Your children all, as they come to understanding, join themselves to the people of God; you are happy—you *are* rich!

What a power for good this church has been! Its influence has been felt not merely in this region, but wherever its members have gone, even beyond our own continent. Who can measure the length and breadth of such a power? It will never perish; it will go on unrecognized, yet increasing, while the world stands, yea, through eternity. What a glorious gathering will that be, when all the faithful members of this church shall meet beyond the river, and join in ceaseless praises for what God hath here wrought!

LETTERS FROM INVITED GUESTS.

At the close of the delivery of Rev. William P. Alcott's address, the pastor read ten letters which had been received from former pastors and members of the church. The writers of these letters were Mrs. Amy E. Todd, of Lake Ridge, N. Y.; Miss A. Peck, a Missionary teacher among the Indians at Pekin, Niagara County, N. Y.; Mrs. Elizabeth North, of Chicago, Ill.; Mrs. B. W. Colton, of West Springfield, Mass.; Heman Mead, of Morristown, N. J., the first Superintendent of the Sunday-school; Rufus Lounsbury, of Iowa; Mrs. Luther Mead, of Greenwich, Huron County, Ohio; Rev. Whitman Peck, of New Haven (at one time Principal of the Academy); Rev. Wm. H. Knouse, a former pastor; and Rev. F. Munson, a former pastor. Copies of the letters from the three last-mentioned persons are inserted here, and are as follows:

LETTER FROM REV. WHITMAN PECK.

NEW HAVEN, Nov. 24, 1877.

REV. MR. WINTER:

Dear Sir—I regret very much that, so far as I can judge now, I shall not be able to accept the invitation of your Church to attend their Semi-Centennial Celebration. It would afford me great pleasure to be present. Though I was quite young when the church was organized, I remember the time, and the interest manifested by its original members. I have been familiar, also, with its subsequent history, and can bear testimony to the devotion and zeal of many who have sustained it. I trust they feel they have been abundantly rewarded for their self-denial and liberality. At least, I believe that the great Head of the Church has been ready to say to them, as He said to the ancient church in Ephesus—"I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience." I hope, too, that He has not the same occasion to add: "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." The church has been very useful, and I trust that in future, as in the past, its record will be honorable, and its influence good. It is remarkable, I think, that both the deacons first appointed still survive, though most of the original members have gone to receive their reward on high.

Mrs. Peck, as well as myself, regrets that she cannot attend the Semi-Centennial of the church.

Fraternally yours,

W. PECK.

LETTER FROM REV. WM. H. KNOUSE.

REV. A. WINTER :

Dear Bro.—I have deferred sending you a final communication, in the hope that I might be able to send you an acceptance of your invitation to attend, as one of her former pastors, the Semi-Centennial Celebration of the Church at North Greenwich.

But I am at last obliged to deny myself the very great pleasure of being with you; a pleasure which would be all the greater, from the fact that I have not been able to visit my old parish since my removal, more than fourteen years ago.

Such an occasion seems to provide an opportunity, especially suitable and acceptable, for bridging, with the renewal of Christian friendships, so long a separation, and I am, therefore, very loth to forego it. It would be to me a great enjoyment, repeated in every opportunity to recognize, with mutual greetings, the attendants upon my youthful ministry, and to freshen the fading memory of persons, places and events connected with my first crude attempts to preach the Gospel. That ministry, so inexperienced and imperfect, as I now recall it, I fear brought more real and lasting good to me than it bestowed upon my people. Of the good it did me, I am sure, at least, as it revealed defects and failures from which came a higher standard and a riper wisdom.

So, as long as the Master may spare me to labor in His service, I shall ever regard, with a peculiar and tender interest, the church and people among whom my ministry had its feeble beginnings, and with whom are associated the sacred memories of the departed.

Though absent in body, I shall be present in spirit on the day that shall bring you together to rehearse the history of the fifty years gone, and my thanksgivings and prayers shall unite with yours.

A glad and grateful time it will be to you all, surely, and especially to the veterans who sowed and planted for God in the beginning, and are now spared, in a green old age, to witness and rejoice in the growth and fruit with which He has rewarded their faith and labor. May God gather them in His own good time, and give the church many whom He shall deem worthy to be their successors, that their good work may be transmitted, with increase, to future generations.

Should these lines be read to the people, they will overlook whatever of egotism may be in them, and accept my warmest greetings and heartiest wishes. Wishing you all success and joy in your ministry, dear brother, I remain,

Yours fraternally,

WM. H. KNOUSE.

Deep River, Conn., Dec. 21st, 1877.

LETTER FROM REV. F. MUNSON.

DEAR BRETHREN OF THE CHURCH IN NORTH-GREENWICH :

I regret that I am unable to be with you on the interesting occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the organization of your Church, and of the dedication of your house of worship; and I most heartily send you my congratulations that you have reached this time in the enjoyment of prosperity, and that you have so many reasons for thanksgiving, as you review the way in which the kind Father has led you. My connection with you began slightly when, on the Lord's day preceding my graduation from the theological seminary, I first preached in your pulpit; continued in my soon engaging to abide with you for a time in Gospel labors; and resulted in my ordination as your pastor. I was received very kindly by you, and my many deficiencies were charitably overlooked. I think I can truly say that it was my earnest endeavor to serve you faithfully in the gospel; and it gives me great pleasure to testify that you were not wanting in faithful co-operation with me in the efforts made to promote the cause of Christ, and to lead souls into the kingdom of the Redeemer. Indeed, there were not a few of you who, by longer experience in the Master's vineyard, were qualified to lead the way in some kinds of spiritual effort. You knew, at least, much better the special history and acquired tendencies of the local harvest-field.

The first season of large ingathering under my ministry, however, commenced and continued in a way which I suppose was not looked for by any. On a Christmas eve, six persons, mostly young, came together in the parsonage to hear what I might say to them, conversationally, on the way of salvation. It was in compliance with an invitation given from the pulpit the Sunday before. The names of these persons, very dear in remembrance, are before me as I write. Perhaps none of us then thought of the time as that which commemorates the birth of our Saviour, but that evening proved to be the beginning or manifestation of a gentle and prolonged work of grace, which was carried forward, week after week, by the same means by which it commenced, and which resulted in the new birth of many precious souls. The number in attendance on this inquiry meeting increased till as many as twenty-five were sometimes present. These meetings were held on each Monday evening, and to me they were very delightful. The spiritual exercises in the minds and hearts of the dear young friends who assembled were noiseless, but thorough and happy. The kingdom of God came not with observation, but it came; and whether the young girls went silently away, or paused in the sitting-room to look upon the little babe sleeping in its mother's arms, they were drawing near the Saviour, consciously beginning to put trust in Him, and intelligently making Him the first choice of their hearts. These weekly inquiry meetings were the only special means used. Commencing at Christmas, they continued till near June, and, as the fruits of them, about twenty-four persons were, at different Communion seasons, received to the church. I believe that these persons have mostly manifested in their subsequent lives the fruits of the Spirit. Some of them have since been tried, and found faithful, amid the temptations of the camp, and some of them have gone before to heaven.

Another special and fruitful work of grace was subsequently granted us in connection with the valuable assistance of our dear brother, Rev. E. D. Kinney, now gone to glory, and as faithful and fervent a servant of Christ as we have

ever met with. In this case, the labors of months were concentrated in a few days, the daily inquiry meeting, in addition to the preaching services, being one of the essential means. The results were happy, giving abundant occasion for thankfulness to God. Thirty-seven persons of different ages, from the man of above sixty to the child of ten, were received to the Church at one May Communion season. I mention these seasons because they were marked by comparatively large gatherings. There were other additions, in smaller numbers, at different times.

The first person whom I received to the church was a dear sister, on her death-bed, a few days previous to her departure to the better world. I find that during my ministry of nine years with you, one hundred were received to your Communion. Of these, eighty united with the church by profession of faith. At the beginning of those years, there were about ninety members of the church; at the close there were a hundred and fifty. Surely the blessing of the God of the Covenant was with us. The children were all baptized; and the God of Abraham remembered it when the children grew up.

Of the eighteen persons who united in organizing the church fifty years ago, one half were still living in your fellowship when I came among you. The number is less now. Some passed away while I was with you; one in whose hope the millennial glory was always brightly shining; and others have gone since. But some of you still remain, and I am sure you must look back over this half century with great thankfulness and joy. God has answered your prayers, and set the seal of his approval upon your early sacrifices and efforts. He has given you, in a large degree, the spirit of spiritual enterprise, courage, activity and hopefulness. Large numbers were gathered in under the faithful labors of your first pastor, who years ago went to his reward; and succeeding pastorates have been bountifully blessed, till now the small one has become a strong nation. The labors which had become too heavy for your hands have been taken up by others; and as, one by one, you go to join the Church triumphant in heaven, you leave a church militant, well armed with the armor of God, habituated to success, and hopeful, through the Divine blessing, of continued prosperity. May the next half century be as rich in blessings to the church which God led you to form as the last has been; yea, may your largest hopes and expectations be exceeded by the larger gifts of God in the gracious realities of the future years.

I cannot fail to remember, as I now write to you, that, while the church is one from generation to generation, there are many who have come into fellowship with it since the time when I ceased to be formally connected with you. The children have happily come in by the side of the fathers and mothers, or have taken the places of the fathers and mothers who have been promoted to the Church on high. I love the children for the fathers' sake; for I love, have ever loved, and ever shall love the church which was the sphere of my early labors in the Gospel. The years I spent with you form a very happy portior of my life, and I look back upon many of their scenes with lively satisfaction and pleasure. I am very grateful to God for whatever I was enabled to do to promote the prosperity of Zion, to lead souls to the Saviour, to encourage Christians in faith and duty, to comfort the sick and afflicted, and to smooth the pillow of the dying with the consolations of Christ. May God bless you. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all; and, all errors pardoned and all sins forgiven, may we continue our union in the perfect communion of heaven.

Affectionately yours in the Gospel,

Haddam Neck, Dec. 18, 1877.

F. MUNSON.





